

Can you introduce yourself and share what drives your passion for agriculture?

I'm Bella Murfin, the Director General at the Country Land and Business Association. I grew up in the countryside and now live in rural England, and I've spent most of my career focused on how we can make the very best use of our land. It's the lifeblood of the planet, and the foundation of our economy, so we must treat it well.

What challenges have you faced in your career and how did you overcome them?

My greatest challenge was having children and trying to balance a demanding career with raising a family. For me, it was a game-changer when I moved from solo part-time working to forming a job-share, allowing me to make an impact at work whilst having enough energy to try and do a good job at home as well. I've not always got it right, but having a second brain, cheerleader and confidante through that partnership was career-defining for me.

What led you to your current role? Was there a defining moment?

The CLA supports people to make the most of their land, providing vital advice and guidance to our members, and advocating for policies that will help them make environmentally and financially sustainable choices. There's so much untapped potential in the rural economy and I want to be part of helping to unlock it.



Bella Murfin

Director General at the Country
Land and Business Association
(CLA)

I've got to give a special shout-out to my former job-share partner. She lifted me up through tough times and through good ones, and I'll be ever-grateful for her support.

What advice would you give to women entering your field today?

Our farm businesses are feeding millions of people every day, helping to restore nature, growing trees, providing places for people to visit, and adopting cutting edge tech to do all of that better. Reach out and talk to people in different parts of the industry and learn about the many ways to be a part of that.

How does your work contribute to the future of agriculture?

Around 80% of the CLA's 26000 members are involved in agriculture in some way. I lead the CLA team across England and Wales, full of experts that are advising them as they make decisions about how to manage their land.

There are big challenges facing agriculture right now, including difficult changes announced in the last

budget that are making it hard for agricultural businesses to plan and grow. And there is change on the horizon, with live government consultation on a national Land Use Framework, a 25 year Farming Roadmap, and Planning reform, to name just a few. We are pushing for the policies that will help agriculture to thrive.

What is the biggest misconception about women in your sector that you have personally experienced or challenged?

That showing emotion is a sign of weakness. At times during my career, I've cried tears of frustration and been met with many different responses from sympathy to disdain. I worked for an inspiring female leader - Claire Moriarty - who encouraged her team to bring their whole selves to work, and I've learned to share more of myself as I've developed my career. Showing and sharing my highs and lows is a part of being trusted and understood by my colleagues, and creating a safe space where people can be themselves and perform at their best.